

## **Hopi Tribe Press Conference**

### **Briefing Paper**

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, May 27, 2015

**Arrival time:** 1:00 pm

**Press Conference:** 2:00 pm

**Location:** Heard Museum

**Steele Auditorium**

**2301 North Central Avenue**

**Phoenix, Arizona 85004**

**Tel: 602-252-8840**

**POC:** Debra Utacia Krol at 602-251-0218 or [dkrol@heard.org](mailto:dkrol@heard.org)

#### **Background:**

Eve, the Paris auction house, has scheduled the sixth auction on June 1, 2015 in Paris, which includes sacred tribal objects protected under U.S. statutes. The Hopi Tribe has sought to stop the sale of Hopi ceremonial objects both in the United States and overseas since 2013. The Hopi Tribe attempted to prevent auction sales of religious objects in France through judicial and administrative means in April 2013, December 2013, June 2014 and December 2014. Judicial proceedings were used to attempt to prevent the April 2013, December 2013 and June 2014 auction sales, without success. All three filings before the French civil court were dismissed because of the legal standard required in the French civil court system, which is to establish the bad faith of the current possessor.

Twice, in June and December 2014, the Hopi Tribe and the Holocaust Art Restitution Project, attempted to suspend each auction sale through administrative proceedings in France before the “Conseil des Ventes Volontaires” (“CVV”), controlled by the French Ministry of Justice and which has the power to suspend auction sales.

Twice, the CVV refused to withdraw katsina friends in prior proceedings by holding the incomprehensible position that neither the Hopi Tribe, nor individual Hopi tribal members, had any legal standing to challenge these sales. This grotesque jurisprudence flies in the face of the long-standing recognition of Native American tribal sovereignty and the fact that U.S. law clearly establishes that federally recognized Indian Tribes have the power to sue in any number of matters. The Hopi Tribe is an ancient culture — with more than 14,117 enrolled members today — that has remained steadfast to its culture, language, heritage and spirituality. It is also a sovereign nation federally recognized by the U.S. government and should be treated accordingly.

The Hopi sacred objects being auctioned in Paris include lots 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, and 59. In particular, Lot 57 has been identified as from the Bow Clan of Orayvi (Oraibi) village on 3rd Mesa. All of the sacred items are protected by criminal provisions of the Native American

Graves Protection and Repatriation Act that governs the return of Native American cultural items (human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony) to lineal descendants and cultural affiliated Indian tribes. These objects are also protected by criminal provisions under the Bald and Golden Eagle Act; the Endangered Species Act; as well as traditional Federal embezzlement statutes.

All ceremonial and religious entities are under the sole care taking and responsibility for stewardship by initiated Hopi society members. These members are vested with the care taking and protection of these sacred entities. As such, they are considered sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony and cannot be transferred, sold, conveyed and removed from the jurisdiction without permission of the Hopi Tribe.

**Speakers Profiles**  
**the Hopi Tribe Press Conference**  
**May 27th, 2015**  
**The Heard Museum**

**Congressman Paul Gosar**, a dentist and small business owner from Prescott, Arizona, is serving his third term representing the people of the 4th District of Arizona. He currently serves on the Natural Resources Committee as well as the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Rep. Gosar currently serves on the Subcommittee on National Security and the Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs and is a member of the Native American Caucus.

**Congressman David Schweikert**, elected to Congress in 1990, is a lifelong resident of Arizona with deep ties to Arizona's 6th District, which encompasses the northern Phoenix metropolitan area including the cities of Phoenix, Scottsdale, and portions of Cave Creek and Carefree. He is a long-time advocate for free enterprise, economic growth, and veterans.

**Chairman Herman Honanie** is currently serving his second year of a two-year term as chairman of the Hopi Tribal Council that represents more than 14,000 members in northeastern Arizona. The Hopi Tribe has an ancient culture and has remained steadfast to maintain and defend its culture, language, heritage and spirituality.

**Pierre Ciric**, Esq. The Ciric Law Firm, LLC is a founding partner of the Ciric Law Firm, PLLC, a boutique law firm specialized in commercial litigation services with a special portfolio in restitution of stolen or looted cultural heritage and art. He currently represents the heirs of a French Jewish family seeking to obtain restitution of Nazi looted artwork from an American university. Ciric has obtained restitution of an important "Judaica" religious object on behalf of an Eastern European Jewish community from an American collector; and, most recently, has secured the return of two Hopi sacred objects from an auction house in New York.

**John Bulla**, Interim Director of the Heard Museum, a leading internationally recognized American Indian educational and cultural arts institution. Founded in 1929, the Heard Museum sets the standard for collaborating with Native people to present first-person voices through innovative programs, exhibitions and festivals. Providing an educational foundation for the public and strengthening ties with Indian Country is a priority of the Heard Museum.

**Dr. Robert Breunig**, retiring President and CEO of the Museum of Northern Arizona ("MNA"), is a distinguished museum professional having served in numerous leadership positions including serving as a commissioner on the Arizona Commission on the Arts. Dr. Breunig is directly responsible for stronger ties established between the MNA and the Hopi, Zuni, Navajo tribes and the hispanic community.

**Hopi Tribe Press Conference:  
Actions Taken**

**May 13, 2015 Legal Affidavit Requesting Protection and Return of eight (8) items (See attached)**

**May 21, 2015 Entire Arizona Congressional Delegation Issued Letter of Assistance Request from Attorney General and Director of the FBI (see attached)**

**May 26, 2015 Letter to President Hollande May 26, 2015 (see attached)**

**May 26, 2015 HARP media release (see attached)**

**May 27, 2015 Filing of administrative proceeding before the CVV requesting the withdrawal of the lots described in the above-referenced affidavit**

**Fact Sheet (see attached)**

**The Hopi Tribe Press Conference  
Schedule  
Wednesday, May 27th, 2015**

- 1:00 pm**      **Participants gather in Green Room**  
Light refreshments and beverages  
Test microphones, lights, equipment
- 1:45 pm**      **All speakers together, Steele Auditorium**
- 2:00 pm**      **John Bulla, Interim Director/CEO, The Heard Museum**  
Welcome to Heard Museum  
Introduces speakers and agenda with Q&A at end  
Introduces Congressman Gosar
- 2:05**              Congressman Gosar speaks (5 min)  
(Congress, International Law Enforcement, Protection of American and Native American Cultural Heritage and Sacred Objects)
- 2:10 pm**      Mr. Bulla introduces Congressman Schweikert
- 2:11 pm**      Congressman Schweikert speaks (5 min) (Congress, International Law Enforcement, Protection of American and Native American Cultural Heritage and Sacred Objects)
- 2: 16 pm**      Mr. Bulla introduces Chairman Honanie
- 2:17 pm**      Chairman Honanie speaks (5-10 min)  
(Cultural heritage significance)
- 2:25 pm**      Mr. Bulla introduces Mr. Pierre Ciric.
- 2:26 pm**      Mr. Ciric speaks (5 min)  
(US and French legal statutes)
- 2:31 pm**      Mr. Bulla introduces Agent Timothy Carpenter of the FBI (5 min)  
(How the US Justice and FBI are resolving the crisis)
- or**
- 2:31 pm**      Mr. Bulla introduces Mr. Robert Breunig, former director of the Museum of Northern Arizona

**2:32 pm (or 2:37 pm)** Mr. Breunig speaks (5 minutes)  
(Cultural heritage and what is at stake.)

**2:37 pm (or 2:42 pm)** Mr. Bulla Closes the press conference

**2:38 pm (or 2:43 pm)** Questions/Answers from the media (20 minutes)

**3:00 pm** Mr. Bulla closes the Press Conference

**3:00 pm** Speakers adjourn to Green Room